1994 International Year of the Family
Année internationale de la famille
Año Internacional de la Familia
Международный год семьи
السنة الدولية للأسرة
国际家庭年

Guide for a NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME on the International Year of the Family

United Nations

Preface

The major activities for the observance of the International Year of the Family (IYF) will be concentrated at the local, regional and national levels. These activities will be supported by the United Nations and its system of organizations, which will act as facilitators, coordinators and catalysts of action. Preparations for IYF envisage, as a prerequisite, the establishment of a national coordinating body in each country to coordinate all the activities within that country and to link the national efforts into an international network of activities.

The suggestions contained in the present *Guide for a National Action Programme on the International Year of the Family* are intended to facilitate the development of national activities and to inspire the implementation of innovative and culturally sensitive programmes for each country. While it has not been possible to take into consideration in the *Guide* the variety of situations that national coordinating bodies are facing, suggestions are offered though they are, at best, a starting point for discussion at the national or local level. Consistent with the national focus of the International Year of the Family, each specific coordinating body must feel free.

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Introduction

Strengthening families as basic units of society

Far from being static, families are dynamic units engaged in an intertwined process of individual and group development. They can be viewed from three different perspectives. First, a family can be seen as a biological unit whose members are linked together by blood ties; this relationship is often institutionalized through marriage or sanctioned by an equivalent relationship and describes the kinship between mothers, fathers and their children. Secondly, a family can be seen as a social unit consisting of a number of people, who usually live together in the same household and share different developmental tasks and social functions. Thirdly, a family can be seen as a psychological unit defined around the personal feelings and emotional bonds of its members. In a psychological conception of families, children who have moved out, or even dead parents, may still be considered part of the family.

In many parts of the world, owing to various social, political and economic changes, families are undergoing tremendous stresses that weaken their ability to care for their members. There is a global recognition of the need for societies to support families in their important functions. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex), in article 10, provides that "the widest possible protection and assistance should be accorded to the family, which is the natural and fundamental group unit of society, particularly for its establishment and while it is responsible for the care and education of dependent children".

Families require a comprehensive and, at the same time, synthesizing social policy approach, as they provide the fullest reflection, at the grass-roots level, of the strengths and weaknesses of a country's social welfare environment.

Objectives of the International Year of the Family

The General Assembly, in its resolution 44/82, proclaimed 1994 as the International Year of the Family (IYF). The objectives of IYF are to stimulate local, national and international actions as the starting-point of a sustained long-term effort:

(a) To increase awareness of family issues among Governments as well as in the private sector;

(b) To strengthen national institutions to formulate, implement and monitor policies in respect of families;

(c) To stimulate efforts to respond to problems affecting, and affected by, the situation of families;

(d) To enhance the effectiveness of local, national and regional efforts to carry out specific programmes concerning families;

(e) To improve the collaboration between national and international organizations in support of multisectoral activities;

(f) To build upon the results of international activities concerning women, children, youth, the aged and the disabled, as well as of other major events of concern to the family or its individual members.

Information material

In addition to a quarterly bulletin *(The Family)* and an *Occasional Papers Series* on family issues (currently available only in English), the IYF secretariat has published a brochure in English, French and Spanish and posters in the six official languages of the United Nations. Guidelines on the use of the IYF logo are also available in the six official languages. Other useful materials are listed in annex I.

Voluntary Fund for the International Year of the Family

Limited financial support for IYF and its family-specific activities is available from the Voluntary Fund for IYF. The Fund will support operational elements of the programme for IYF, particularly in the developing countries, and promote research studies and the exchange of information on family issues. Project proposals elaborating the objectives, activities, intended beneficiaries, budget and amount of support requested may be submitted to the IYF secretariat. Pledges of contributions to the Fund, as well as requests for funding for IYF-specific projects can be sent to the Coordinator for IYF.

Contributions to the Fund, with an indication that they are for the *Voluntary Fund for IYF*, can be deposited in:

- United Nations General Trust Funds Account (No. 015-004473) at the Chemical Bank, New York 10017, United States of America, or
- United Nations Contributions and Revenue-Producing Income (Dollar) Account (No. 0112-75005/00) at the Creditanstalt-Bankverein, Schottengasse 6, A-1010 Vienna, Austria.

National focal points for the International Year of the Family

Governments have been asked to identify an agency and contact person to serve as a focal point to liaise with the IYF secretariat in preparing for IYF. With the assistance of the focal point, information from the IYF secretariat can be distributed to all the governmental and non-governmental organizations and other groups involved within each country. In some cases, countries may wish to appoint a focal point before a formal national coordinating committee is established to ensure a regular communication flow. It is important that the focal point subsequently joins the formal national coordinating committee to ensure continuity, although this is not always the case.

National coordinating committees

Governments are invited to establish a national coordinating mechanism of persons with an interest in the family, such as a national coordinating committee for IYF, to plan, stimulate and coordinate activities by governmental and non-governmental agencies. Governments are requested to inform the IYF secretariat of the steps being taken to establish these coordinating committees and of any plans to maintain or disband the national focal point.

In establishing a coordinating mechanism, Governments may draw on their experience in the coordination of other international years, such as the International Women's Year (1975), the International Year of the Child (1979), the International Year of Disabled Persons (1981) or the International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace (1985).

In order to accomplish its objectives, a national coordinating mechanism for IYF should have adequate political influence and high public visibility. Some Governments have nominated the President of the Republic, the First Lady, or some other eminent person as the chairperson or the honorary president of the national coordinating committee.

Many Governments find it useful to nominate a large coordinating body of members with diverse influence and resources. In this kind of coordinating committee, the coordinating and advisory functions are emphasized. It is also advisable to appoint a small working subcommittee from among the members of the coordinating body to ensure the efficiency of the preparatory work. Another approach is to limit the membership of the coordinating committee and to establish several working subcommittees for specific purposes.

Functions of a national coordinating committee

Some of the functions of a national coordinating committee are described below.

Coordination of local and national activities

In order to use its resources effectively, the committee should act as a coordinating body for all governmental and non-governmental activities related to IYF. It should also serve as an information source for all activities at the local and national levels. An attempt should be made to coordinate, or facilitate the coordination of, activities of all other groups at a local level who are working on IYF.

The relationship with local coordinating bodies should include a strong two-way communication flow to boost the information provision and reporting functions of the national coordinating committees. National coordinating committees should also promote the exchange of information between local organizers and groups to avoid duplication of effort and to enrich the overall field of activity.

Promotion of IYF

The committee should provide an effective channel for the promotion of IYF at the local and national levels, involving both governmental and non-governmental organizations. It should generate and support activities for IYF and sensitize public opinion on family-related issues and problems, which will necessitate a strong partnership between the national coordinating committee and the national media.

Elaboration of a national programme

The committee should elaborate and implement a national programme for the preparations for, and observance of, IYF, including suggestions for the improvement of the situation of families, and setting of priorities, as well as an agenda for action.

Review of the situation of families and family policy

On the national and local levels, there is a need to review and assess the situation of families, identifying specific issues and problems. Also, family policies should be monitored and evaluated, including various governmental and non-governmental programmes of direct and indirect concern to families.

Research on the family

The committee should promote, coordinate and, if possible, undertake research on the family. It would be beneficial if the committee or another suitable body could serve as a depository for national information and data relating to the family.

Incorporation of programmes for the family into national development strategies

For a long-lasting effect, it is critical to develop strategies to incorporate new or existing family programmes into national development plans. This process may require more time than is available for the preparations for IYF in 1994, but it should be begun as part of the effort to develop long-range plans to strengthen and support families. This process is elaborated in more detail in the sections below.

Coordination of national and local activities

Involving all interested parties

To ensure the widest possible participation and impact, it would be advisable to invite all interested parties to be involved in the preparations for and observance of IYF. According to regional and national circumstances, these might include:

(a) Governmental bodies dealing with social affairs, health, education, housing, employment or other areas of concern for families;

(b) Non-governmental organizations active in the fields of family, children, youth, women, men, the elderly and the disabled, as well as any other associations interested in family affairs;

(c) Private-sector groups with an interest in supporting family ties, or in providing services for families as customers, clients or employees.

Working groups may be established for specific purposes, such as preparing a publication or organizing an event. These groups should report to the coordinating committee to ensure an efficient division of labour and flow of information.

Facilitating the exchange of information

The national coordinating committee has a pivotal function in ensuring a regular flow of information on IYF to, from and between interested participants.

This process also encompasses providing regular reports on national activities to the IYF secretariat and, in turn, receiving and disseminating information on activities in other countries.

National coordinating committees will generally require enough logistical and operational support to collect, store and disseminate information from and to the international, national and local levels.

Promotion of the International Year of the Family

One of the primary tasks of the coordinating committee is to plan the phases and ways in which the public should be informed of IYF and sensitized to family questions. The experiences derived from earlier international years might prove helpful. A high level of visibility is needed to attain the goals of IYF and a substantial preparatory process is needed to publicize the activities planned during IYF.

In addition, the committee should be prepared to devote time to planning promotional and awareness-raising campaigns. Separate approaches may be required; for example, to raise awareness of unique family issues at the national level or of the importance of families to the national society as distinct from the objective of raising awareness of IYF as an international event. Special efforts may be required to ensure that information on IYF is accessible to all groups in the national society, which may mean, for example, making material available in the language of minority populations, in Braille or as cassettes.

It may also be important to assess the current state of public information and opinion on families, including the identification of popular misconceptions and stereotypes.

Sensitizing public opinion might be undertaken in phases. The first phase might be to alert the media of the proclamation of IYF and to seek their expertise and cooperation. National, regional and local media, in the form of television, radio, newspapers or journals, have a wide public exposure and provide useful channels for information dissemination.

The second phase might be to seek the cooperation of different organizations, associations, schools, libraries and other interest groups in distributing information as well as in collecting it, for example in the form of questionnaires.

The third phase might be the implementation phase in which forums for public discussion might be established and information disseminated. Information on family policies, problems concerning families, IYF events and other materials should be distributed widely. A most important target group would be decision makers, both at the local and national levels.

Elaboration of a national programme

For effective planning, it is advisable to make a step-by-step agenda with a timetable and clearly state the organs and persons responsible for each item. The items could be divided, for example, into three categories: (a) existing programmes; (b) special events or short-term projects; (c) new initiatives.

In elaborating a national programme, it is also advisable to distinguish between short- term goals (increasing awareness of family issues by organizing events, disseminating information) and long-term goals (reviewing, restructuring or enhancing existing programmes and initiating new ones) to formulate and implement policies in respect of families. Both tasks are demanding and necessitate planning and the setting of priorities. Ensuring complementarity and continuity in drawing up the short-, medium- and long-term agenda is an important aspect of such planning.

Local and national target areas

In addition to the global objectives of IYF set out in the introduction above, national goals that are specific to local cultures and concerns are envisaged for each country and each region. The concept of the family differs in each culture and the needs and problems of families may vary substantially even within the same country.

In order to select target areas, it may be important to identify:

(a) Different types of family found in society;

(b) Sources of information on families;

(c) Sufficiency of information on families;

(d) Type of misinformation or assumptions existing regarding families;

(e) Forms of support that families need;

(f) Whether laws concerning families are consistent with the International Covenants on Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex) or the Convention on the Rights of the Child (General Assembly resolution 44/25);

(g) Availability of appropriate subsidies or reductions in favour of families;

(h) Sufficiency and appropriateness of non-financial programmes to support families;

(i) Whether existing programmes and services are complementary, harmonized and coordinated;

(j) Appropriate mix of services;

(k) Problems in the delivery and administration of existing services;

(l) Kind of services or training needed to strengthen and support the functions of families;

(m) Most urgent needs to be met;

(n) Major obstacles (economic, legal, social, historical, institutional, psychological) against progress;

(o) Changes that have been introduced, and whether similar services could be developed, or more innovative and appropriate ways of proceeding;

(p) Best mechanisms for designing and testing new approaches;

(q) Persons, groups and organizations needed for cooperation;

(r) Most effective combination of existing resources.

In order to accomplish the national objectives, both short-term and long-term actions are likely to be needed. All the activities of IYF should be complementary and contribute to attaining the selected goals.

Setting priorities for short-term goals

The most important short-term goal would be to create and increase awareness of the importance of families to social progress and development. The situations and needs of families should be widely discussed and information on family issues should be gathered and disseminated widely. Besides substantive activities, promotional activities should be considered; for example, organizing special days and events for families; involving children and the public in various contests and innovative activities (selling posters, badges, easy-to-read materials etc.); and encouraging municipal and village authorities to organize special events.

Depending on local needs or traditions, activities to meet short-term goals might include some of those listed below (see also annexes II and III):

Arranging events

- Organizing congresses, seminars, meetings and discussions on family issues
- Organizing special "family days" (when family members might visit the workplace, participate in festivities and have free access to amusement parks etc.) or family reunion days (when families are encouraged to get together)
- Organizing demonstrations on behalf of families, or whatever seems innovative and suitable to create a positive atmosphere towards families

Disseminating information

- Issuing booklets, brochures, articles, posters, postcards, badges etc.
- Cooperating with the mass media on issues concerning families and family policies
- Holding meetings with parents and "open house" in different social services centres and offices dealing with family affairs
- Involving employers in the publicizing of family services or policies of benefit to employees

Activating discussion

- Arranging public polls, inquiries, votes on different family subjects such as the roles of spouses, parents, siblings and children, and the relationships between in-laws
- Organizing children's competitions in drawing, essay-writing etc.

- Holding debates and public discussions
- Producing a television series on family matters

The priority of activities as well as their timing needs careful consideration. If the coordinating committee is able to set up working groups or cooperate with special interest groups, considerably more could be accomplished than if the committee alone were responsible. There are usually numerous professional associations and groups that might be interested and to which some of the tasks could be delegated. Similarly, it is important to identify resources that exist to support activities of all types and at all levels, and to canvass these resources. One way of giving the widest possible visibility to IYF is to incorporate a family theme in the existing programmes and future activities of all interested organizations.

Setting priorities for long-term goals

Beyond the activities prior to and during 1994, the ultimate objective for IYF is to improve the situation of families permanently and to strengthen their ability to fulfil their functions, which requires careful and long-term planning. One of the most important prerequisites for effective long-term planning would be a report on the current status of families. This state-of-the-family report could be prepared by holding a series of expert group meetings culminating in a national conference at which recommendations and conclusions would be developed. These could then be published and distributed to legislators, policy makers, practitioners and researchers to be used as a basis for long-term planning. A longer term approach might involve establishing a national research programme on family issues.

It is proposed that the goals and target areas should concentrate on supporting families and their proper functioning rather than on examining symptoms of malfunctioning; for instance, programmes should be oriented towards enriching spousal relationships rather than towards diminishing the amount of divorces. Goals should also be concrete enough to allow for an evaluation to determine if they were reached or not. (Examples: update the Marriage Act to provide for more equality between spouses; lengthen parental leave and make it applicable and feasible for fathers as well; establish day-care centres for the children of shift workers; provide courses on "Responsible fatherhood" and "Home economics"; develop a curriculum and centres devoted to the prevention of family violence; introduce curricula on "Preparation for family life".)

Review of the situation of families and family policy

In order to decide on the priorities for long-term goals, an overview of the situation of families is needed. One useful model for determining the long-term needs of families would be to consider if the functions of families are being sufficiently strengthened and supported. Some functions of a family are that it:

(a) Establishes emotional, social and economic bonds between spouses;

(b) Provides a framework for procreation and sexual relations between spouses;

(c) Gives a name and status to family members, especially to children;

(d) Provides for basic care of children and, in many cultures, of aged and disabled relatives;

(e) Facilitates the socialization and education of children (and parents);

(f) Protects family members;

(g) Offers emotional care, affection and recreation to its members;

(h) Provides services and resources for its members.

The functions of the family and ways of supporting them are set out in annex IV.

On the national level, it should be determined whether or not each function is being supported effectively by such means as: (a) family policies and legislation; (b) benefits and subsidies; and (c) services and training.

Different sub-themes for IYF could be developed from the issues highlighted below, following an identification of the most urgent needs of families in the community concerned.

Establishing emotional, social and economic bonds between spouses

Marriage and equivalent relationships give the two partners a new role in the new family: that of being a spouse. Constant efforts throughout the years are usually required to develop a warm and well-functioning spousal relationship, whether it is established through traditional rituals, formalized marriage or cohabitation.

In some countries, the legal age of marriage for females is as low as 12 or 14 years; sometimes minimum legal ages are not enforced. Only 22 countries have granted equal rights to both sexes in matters of marriage, divorce and family property.

Examples of issues needing reconsideration

LAWS AND POLICIES. Do the existing marriage laws protect children from having to contract a marriage early in life? Do the laws grant equal rights to both sexes, especially in matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance and family property? Is there any need to sensitize public opinion to the roles of spouses?

BENEFITS. Do benefits or tax reductions support the institution of marriage? Do such benefits promote equality between spouses?

SERVICES. Is sufficient guidance given in selecting a partner? Do young people receive enough information on family issues or education on family life? Is there a need for programmes on enriching spousal relationships or for divorce mediation?

Providing a framework for procreation and sexual relations between spouses

The maintenance of appropriate levels of population renewal is crucial to the survival of any society. The health of children is directly affected by their mothers' health and nutrition during pregnancy and infancy. Research has shown that the health of both women and children can be significantly improved by spacing births at least two years apart, avoiding pregnancies before the age of 18 and limiting the total number of pregnancies to four. Since families are the institutions charged with the responsibility for procreation, many countries provide some form of monetary compensation for the care of children.

Sexuality also has a vital function as a connecting link between the spouses even when seen as distinct from procreation. Intimacy and satisfying sexual roles for both partners may also need to be learned and promoted.

Examples of issues needing reconsideration

LAWS AND POLICIES. Is the existing legislation on procreation (e.g. on the possibility of abortion, *in vitro* fertilization) updated and consistent with the interests of the persons concerned, as well as the society or culture? Do the existing norms of sexual roles satisfy both sexes?

BENEFITS. Are there sufficient ways of financially supporting pregnancy and parturition (e.g. in the form of parental leave, free or subsidized care)? Are families adequately compensated for the economic burden of raising children?

SERVICES. Are adequate health services and emotional support available for pregnancy and parturition? Would sexual counselling, information on reproduction for youth, or family planning programmes be needed? What kind of programmes on "Responsible fatherhood" would be appropriate in the cultural context?

Giving a name and status to family members, especially children

Usually, children born in wedlock automatically inherit the name of the family and associated legal rights (e.g. to inherit family property). Unfortunately, the right to inherit does not apply to females in all countries. Children born out of wedlock should also have the same rights as those of other children. Likewise, adoption laws should give adopted children rights equal to those of biological children.

Examples of issues needing reconsideration

LAWS AND POLICIES. Are all children accorded equal rights concerning the name, status, or property of the family regardless of their sex? Do adopted children or children born out of wedlock enjoy the same rights as other children? Are the laws on guardianship updated, for example, after a possible divorce; is joint custody possible for those who would want it? Are adoption laws in line with Declaration on Social and Legal Principles relating to the Protection and Welfare of Children, with Special Reference to Foster Placement and Adoption Nationally and Internationally (General Assembly resolution 41/85, annex)?

BENEFITS. What responsibilities do fathers have to provide financial support to children born out of wedlock? Is there any public funding available in cases where the father is unknown or is unable to pay? Do tax laws promote the provision of support and protect beneficiaries?

SERVICES. Is there any service or legal aid to assist in matters of guardianship, name-giving or the legal status of children? Are the adoption process and adoption agencies functioning properly, and are they operating in accordance with international standards?

Providing for basic care of family members

The basic care of children and other family members is a crucial task for the family. Without the care provided by the family, many of the sick, disabled and elderly would not be cared for. However, families need support for this task and the burden should be more evenly shared by all family members than was the case before, as care has typically been the responsiblity of women alone. In many cultures, the former traditions of child care no longer exist or, owing to altered family structures or external forces, are no longer able to operate. In declining extended family systems, for example, older relatives may not be able to transfer their knowledge to younger generations. Parental education is also needed. Where both parents work outside the

home, nurseries and kindergartens as well as flexible work arrangements would greatly facilitate the integration of basic care and other responsibilities.

Examples of issues needing reconsideration

LAWS AND POLICIES. Are the laws on custody, responsibilities and rights of children and parents updated? Are the responsibilities and rights of families as compared with those of society well defined? Do both partners receive equal treatment in regard to the custody and financial support of children in the case of separation or divorce?

BENEFITS. Are there economic possibilities for parents to stay at home to take care of infants, or when a child is ill? Is it possible for those in need to receive subsidized day-care assistance? Do families receive any benefits or housing aid, especially for caring for aged or disabled family members? Are adequate housing facilities available for families?

SERVICES. How are parents trained for the basic care of their children? How accessible is guidance and information? Are adequate and safe day-care facilities available? Where do families obtain help if the burden of care is temporarily too heavy?

Facilitating the socialization and education of children (and parents)

Everywhere the socialization of children is considered so important that societies have taken part in it, providing schools and other forms of education. Even during a recession, it would be short-sighted to reduce these efforts, since education is the main way of building for the future of the child and society. The level of education of girls has a direct correlation to the future health of the family, family size and spacing, as well as to its economic well-being.

The special educational needs of children with physical, mental, emotional and cognitive disabilities, children of recent immigrants, of minority groups, aboriginals and low-income groups have to be met.

Examples of issues needing reconsideration

LAWS AND POLICIES. Do all children regardless of their sex, economic situation or physical condition have a right to education? Is basic education available for adults who have not completed their primary or secondary schooling? How do educational policies or curricula affect the home life of families?

BENEFITS. Are there ways of financially supporting education (e.g., in the form of free schools, books, equipment, travel, school meals etc.)? Are families supported to a level that their children can attend school free from the responsibility to earn a living?

SERVICES. Are nurseries and schools inspiring, innovative and attractive? In addition to the formal curriculum, are children encouraged to explore and practise empathy, human dignity, equality and social justice? Is there a need for education programmes for parents? Are schools, kindergartens located where they are needed? Do their operating hours reflect and respect the needs of families? Are mechanisms in place that establish communication between parents and teachers?

Protecting family members

People look to their families for shelter and one of the vital functions of the family is provide protection for its members. Unfortunately, in stressed families this function might be endangered. Family violence has been largely hidden and has only recently been dealt with

openly. It is the responsibility of society to support families in creating a secure place for all its members. Various preventive programmes have proved effective all over the world. The pervasive problem of crime is also an imposing challenge and source of stress for many families. Numerous examples exist where families can be active in reducing their likelihood of being victims of crime. Families may also be important partners in reducing crime in local communities.

Examples of issues needing reconsideration

LAWS AND POLICIES. Do national child protection laws meet international standards? Are any of the different types of violence inside the family legally sanctioned? Are they adequately controlled? Are there laws and policies that help enforce non-violent ways of upbringing or problem-solving? Is the public fully aware of their human rights with regard to dignity and sexual self-regulation?

BENEFITS. To prevent domestic violence, are there, for instance, adequate housing programmes or means of financial support for families in crisis situations?

SERVICES. What kind of prevention programmes would be appropriate? Are shelters, emergency telephones, legal advice and guidance available for troubled families? What kinds of care and therapy would be needed for troubled individuals and families? Are educational and other forms of assistance available to families to reduce their risk of victimization by crime? Are families involved in crime prevention schemes?

Providing emotional care, affection and recreation to family members

By defining the roles and behavioural models of family members, society greatly affects the emotional atmosphere of families. There are numerous old but still practised customs (e.g. in the form of proverbs) that define the roles and relationships between family members. There are also several myths, which are constantly being strengthened through the mass media, concerning motherhood, fatherhood, and the roles of wife, husband and children. These written or implied norms can have an enormous impact on people's behaviour.

Examples of issues needing reconsideration

LAWS AND POLICIES. Do the present social customs regarding family life and the roles of family members satisfy the needs of all concerned? Are the emotional and psychological needs of family members recognized in policy or law?

BENEFITS. Are there provisions for free or subsidized counselling, health-care facilities or leave for burdened families or family members? Are employers encouraged to provide family support services or to recognize the impact of work-related demands and stresses on family life?

SERVICES. Do family members need any kind of sensitization or training in order to provide emotional care for each other? Are there any services for family counselling or family therapy? Do services exist in preventive mental-health care? Are community recreational facilities appropriate to the needs of families and do they help families to spend leisure time together?

Providing services and resources for family members

By defining the goals of social and economic policies, societies define the role of the family as the provider of resources for its members. There are often crucial differences between

government policies for the distribution of public funds to individuals and families. The fewer social benefits and public services there are available, the more the welfare of the individual depends on the resources of the family and the prevention of different risk situations.

Examples of issues needing reconsideration

LAWS AND POLICIES. Is there an equitable division of labour for both sexes in the household and in the labour market? Are there regulations to facilitate the integration of work and family life? What is considered to be the responsibility of society to support families in need? Are family members that participate in family enterprises afforded the same state protection and services as other employees? Is family-based production recognized in economic policy or in development incentive programmes?

BENEFITS. Are there adequate allowances, benefits, tax reductions or subsidies to support families in the performance of their functions? Are benefits programmes harmonized and complementary?

SERVICES. Should children or newly-weds be trained in home economics? Are there services for families when they cannot manage their daily tasks because of illness, disability, age or the number of children? Are there adequate housing facilities for families, youth and the aged? Is housing appropriate to the variety of family forms that exist in the society or culture?

Research on the family

Collecting data on families

Collecting data on families and family policy might be an important national priority of IYF. Material may be made readily available to the public through publications or press releases.

Governmental, community or regional census offices, as well as numerous service agencies and family-related organizations, collect census and other data on families. With the cooperation of these organizations, such data could be used for the purposes of IYF. However, they often fail to elucidate several important issues concerning families especially when more detailed or substantial information would be needed. Universities and research centres might be able to help on more detailed issues and libraries or government information services might publicize and raise awareness of existing sources of information.

Information might be developed on the existing forms of support to families; the types of benefit and their use, as well as the services available to families, the types of client and possibly some of the parameters of such benefits or services. The history of laws concerning families and the benefits that they receive as a proportion of the gross national product are also of interest.

Promoting research

It is important to promote research on families, their forms, functions and needs for support. In cooperation with universities and research institutes, for example, the national coordinating committee should support studies and projects on such issues. (See annexes II and IV.)

Because census or other official data are often collected on the basis of households, special efforts might be taken in the collection of information on families, since there are certain differences between these two concepts. This might involve gathering new and different data, or developing methodologies and capabilities to reconfigure existing data. It may also involve the development of longitudinal files to follow families through their life cycle.

Follow-up to the International Year of the Family

After IYF, it would be advisable to follow up the situation of the families at regular intervals. These situation reports may be more effective if they are developed on a regular schedule that is known to policy makers and other interested groups. Has there been any change in the laws, benefits and services concerning families? What kinds of new programmes and projects have been established? During the design phase of programmes and services, plans should be developed that would allow for rigorous evaluation.

Records should also be kept during the introduction of new initiatives to allow for their evaluation from design to implementation. Often the success or failure of a programme depends on how it is undertaken. Such process evaluations also provide useful information for those attempting to replicate successful programmes, or even in developing programmes to address different problems or to meet specific to local conditions. Because the actual content of programmes (i.e. specific benefits or services for national or local needs) is likely to vary between countries, knowledge on the process of design and implementation is often more transferable than the actual programmes themselves.

Another problem concerns the lack of evaluation research in the area of social policies and the failure to assess the impact of such policies on families. This deficiency can itself have a profound impact on families as regards income security, health or housing and has several causes. First, families, generally, have not been at the forefront of the social policy debate. Secondly, the orientation of much social policy has been focused on the particular needs of individual family members rather than on families as a whole. Finally, many of the methodological tools that are used in evaluation research are often not adequate to the complex task of assessing policy impacts on families. Including family impact assessments as a standard or legally required feature of the national planning process for social or economic development would be an important, durable and ongoing contribution to the objectives of IYF.

Annex I

SAMPLE RESOURCE MATERIALS

Checklist of Activities for an Effective International Year of the Family 1994 produced and distributed by the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family. Copies are available in English, French, German and Italian from:

NGO Executive Secretariat - IYF
An der Hulben 1/15
A-1010 Vienna, Austria
Telephone: 513 86 87
Telefax: 512 16 38 75

Family and Society: Family Thesaurus - Australian Family Studies Indexing Terms 1991
The third edition of the *Thesaurus* to be produced and distributed by:

Australian Institute of Family Studies
300 Queen Street
Melbourne 3000, Victoria
Australia

International Directory of Innovative (Family) Programs For further information contact:

Information Services Directorate
National Center for Social Policy and Practice
750 First Street NE
Washington, D.C. 10002
United States of America
Telephone: (202) 408-8600

International Year of the Family: 1994 A guide to action planning produced by Health and Welfare Canada and available in English and French from:

Federation Coordinator
International Year of the Family
Department of National Health and Welfare
Room 956, Jeanne Mance Building
Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, Ontario K1A OK9, Canada
Telephone: (613) 957-7303/05
Telefax: (613) 952-7417

The IYF secretariat would welcome receiving suggestions and information on plans and programmes, as well as requests for information or material, at the following address:

IYF secretariat
Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs
P.O. Box 500
A-1400 Vienna
Austria
Telephone: (431) 21131 4223
Telefax: (431) 237 497 or (431) 232 156

Annex II

A COMPILATION OF SUGGESTED THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

The family

- A basic unit of society
- Promoting the rights and responsibilities of individual members
- A milieu for caring for the vulnerable
- A seed-bed for gender equality
- A point of convergence for social policy
- Providing the psychological foundation of the future
- Agents and beneficiaries of development
- A resource for the social integration of the disadvantaged
- A matrix for improving the quality of life
- Family services and the training needs of service providers
- The role of families in community and rural development
- Agents and beneficiaries of development at the local level
- The basis for a people-oriented approach to development
- Creating community-based family-life support centres
- Agents for preserving human values, cultural identity and historical continuity
- The impact of industrialization, urbanization and modernization on families
- An ally in education for all
- A partner in environmental protection
- Understanding socio-cultural and political assumptions behind national family laws
- Creating legislation supportive of family
- A touchstone for human rights
- Promoting equal rights for all family members
- Promoting democratic principles and practices within families

IYF

- Taking national, regional and international action on behalf of families
- Enhancing awareness of family issues
- Building upon the achievements of the International Year of the Child, the International Year of Disabled Persons, the International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace, the World Assembly on Ageing and the United Nation Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace
- Promoting values and behaviour patterns benefiting all family members
- Building the smallest democracy at the heart of society
- Empowering families
- Providing legislation, policies, programmes and services
- Improving national capabilities to meet family needs

Spousal relations

- Spouses: a basic subsystem in families
- Fostering new roles for men
- Towards a more equal sharing
- Sexual relations between spouses

- Legal rights of spouses in marriage and divorce
- Promoting women's equality
- Education in family life
- Conflict resolution in relationships

Procreation

- Family planning
- Informed choices on fertility
- Safe motherhood
- Spacing births
- Promoting responsible parenthood
- Safe infancy

Providing children with status and a name

- Equal rights for all children
- Fathers and children born out of wedlock
- Support for adoptive and foster families
- Possibilities for joint custodial care and obstacles
- Parental relationship after divorce
- Needs of single-parent families

Basic care of family members

- Well-being and protection of children
- Promotion of primary health care
- Breastfeeding
- Improving skills in responsible parenting
- Meeting the health and nutrition needs of all family members
- Psychological growth of the child
- Child development and the father's role
- Child and maternal health and the family's role
- Prevention of disabilities
- The family and disabled family members
- The elderly and the family
- Agriculture and food production and the family unit
- Shelter and the family
- Food security and the family
- Preventive care for basic needs and the family
- Family well-being in times of economic constraint

Socialization

- The family and cultural identity
- Child development through family development
- The family as an interacting system
- Parents learning from their children
- The family and the teenager
- Literacy: a primary requirement for families to adapt to changes
- Prevention of drug and alcohol addiction and rehabilitation: the role of families
- Supporting families to prevent crime and delinquency

- Cooperation of schools and parents
- Educating youth for family life
- The family: the foundation for learning and education

Protection of family members

- Caring for youth
- Prevention of family violence and sexual abuse
- Shelters and services for troubled families
- Programmes for child protection
- Caring for vulnerable family members
- Prevention of crime and delinquency and the role of families
- Drug prevention and rehabilitation and the role of families
- Reunification and the well-being of migrant and refugee families
- Family resources for the protection of the environment

Emotional care of family members

- Preventive mental health care and the role of families
- The family and new role models
- Coping with dissonance in the family
- Services supporting families in crisis situations
- Special needs of refugee and migrant families
- Mediating interspousal conflict
- Ameliorating the effects of divorce
- Problem-solving in families
- Adjusting to parenthood

Providing services and resources for family members

- Drawing on family resources and strategies to alleviate poverty
- Reducing the impact of economic adjustment policies on families
- Promoting the equal sharing of household and parental responsibilities
- Promoting equal access to employment
- Balancing work and family responsibilities
- Protecting poor families
- Meeting the housing needs of families
- Promoting the economic self-reliance of families
- Providing support networks for single-parent families
- The family as an income-generating enterprise
- The caring role of the adult child
- Assessing the impact on families of policies, programmes and services
- Concepts, indicators and statistics on the family
- Promoting research on family issues

Annex III

EXAMPLES OF PLANNED NATIONAL ACTIONS

- Establishment of working groups to identify 15 priority subjects regarding the family and to formulate plans of action on: violence, living space, housing, employment, youth, older persons, compensation for contributions, disability, family forms, special burdens, legal system, health, society, media, and education
(Austria)

- Under the national coordinating committee, seven subcommittees are operating to meet government priorities in: public relations, fund-raising, legislation, education, research, health, social services and programmes
(Barbados)

- A public awareness campaign
- Seminars, studies and programmes focusing on health and nutrition
(Bolivia)

- Establishing and funding a non-profit corporation to administer the preparations for and the observance of IYF
- A comprehensive communication strategy on IYF, television programmes, publications in Braille etc.
- Publishing, through the National Statistics Agency, a series of reports on the social and economic characteristics of families
- Publicizing family-related policies of the Government for its employees through workshops, conferences and publications
- International support to the IYF secretariat, Vienna
- Educational materials for Canadian schools
(Canada)

- The council will advise the President on policy measures and supervise and coordinate plans. The national committee, chaired by the First Lady, includes prominent personalities and representatives of non-governmental organizations. Congress will deal with family issues of specific relevance at the Inter-American regional level
(Colombia)

- National priorities in the areas of: health and social protection; the rights and responsibilities of families; the concept and structures of family; the family and education; older persons in the family and society; the family and the environment; and the family and the economic situation have been assigned to working subcommittees, which will recommend specific national actions to be undertaken
(Côte d'Ivoire)

- A conference entitled "The role of the family in the 1990s" is to be documented in a catalogue containing the report of the conference as well as follow-up ideas and proposals
(Denmark)

- A programme to help care for families living in extreme poverty
(Ecuador)

- A ministerial-level committee will explore family issues in the fields of health, welfare and security, national education and religion, labour, culture, and equality
- Private-sector and public-sector committees have been established to recommend how IYF can be observed
- Research and studies on the situation of families
- Publications, promotional activities

(Hungary)

- A commemorative postage stamp
- A state-of-the-family report
- Research on the impact of poverty and unemployment on the family
- Seminars and training workshops on family care for professionals, paraprofessionals and volunteers
- Expert group meetings.

(Israel)

- A report on the situation of families and family policy
- Arranging conferences and seminars for in-depth discussions on family-related issues
- Publishing booklets that promote the importance of family life among children and youth
- A family day
- An exhibition of photographs on family life
- Establishing an honours programme intended to encourage innovations for families
- A rock concert for youth
- A brochure for young couples

(Luxembourg)

- Research on family structures and child development as well as health care for mothers and children
- Conferences, seminars and workshops on family-related issues
- Posters, pamphlets and advertisements

(Malaysia)

- Priorities in health, education, social security, marriage and family life

(Maldives)

- Specialized campaigns to promote IYF among family organizations, social development agencies, associations of older persons, youth, children and trade unions

(Mauritius)

- Round tables, cultural competitions and encounters concerning the family
- Symposia, debates, regional encounters
- Studies on families
- A national federation of organizations involved in family issues
- A national family charter

(Morocco)

- Socialization of children
- Family demographic trends
- Violence in relationships

(Netherlands)

- Creation of committees for the observance of IYF at the state and local levels
- Workshops, seminars, public lectures
- Media presentations
- National family week (held since 1984)

(Nigeria)

- Recommendations for policies and programmes to strengthen solidarity and to promote the development of the Philippine family as the foundation of the nation
(Philippines)

- Promotional campaigns in the media
- Research and studies
- Hosting international conferences
- Analysis of existing legislation
(Poland)

- Preparation of a report on the current situation of the Portuguese family
- Publication of a study on the problems of families
- Creation of an IYF commemorative medal
(Portugal)

- Issues related to women, youth, the elderly and the family
(Senegal)

- Donation of booklets in Spanish to the IYF Secretariat
- Study of the situation of the family nationally
- Seminar on local and regional experience in dealing with family issues
(Spain)

- Enhancing public awareness of the importance of the family and family issues, as well as the role of women in the family
(Thailand)

- Publication of a series of research publications
- Local organizing groups
- Films and special events
(Turkey)

- Film festivals and artistic exchanges
- Priority issues in: family law; cultural identity and continuity; family budgets; health; drug addiction
(Ukraine)

- Primary focus on nutrition, education and health
(Venezuela)

Annex IV

WAYS OF SUPPORTING THE FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY

Functions of the family	**Ways of support**		
	Laws and policies (*examples*)	**Benefits** (*examples*)	**Services** (*examples*)
Establishing bonds between spouses	Laws and customs related to marriage and divorce, roles of spouses	Marriage assistance, tax reductions	Family education, divorce mediation
Procreation and sexual relations between spouses	Laws and policies on abortion, customs on family size, roles of spouses	Maternity allowances, parental leave, tax reductions, housing support	Maternity health centres, midwives, family planning, family training
Giving children a name and status	Laws on names, fatherhood and adoption	Allowances paid by the father and by the State	Legal advice, adoption advice
Basic care of children (and relatives)	Laws and customs on care of the children	Child allowances	Education of parents, well-baby clinics, nurseries
Socialization and education of children (and parents)	Laws on education, traditions and educational policies	Free or subsidized schools, free materials and meals	Kindergardens, schools, family and child guidance centres
Protection of family members	Laws on child protection, criminal laws on violence	Subsidized housing, supported activities	Child protection services, therapies, shelters
Providing emotional care and recreation to family members	Customs on family life and the roles of family members	Subsidized leave for family members	Family counselling, therapies
Providing services and resources for family members	Norms of living and division of labour within the household	Allowances and benefits	Home-help services

GUIDE FOR A NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME ON THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY

Corrigendum

Page i, second paragraph, last line

After free *insert* to develop programmes suited to their own circumstances

Page 14, entry for the International Year of the Family

For Federation Coordinator *read* Federal Coordinator

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